1798

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PROSPECTUS

OF

THE NEW ILLUSTRATION

OF

THE SEXUAL SYSTEM

OF

LINNÆUS,

BY

ROBERT JOHN THORNTON, M.D.

Late of Trinity College, Cambridge; Lecturer on Medical Botany at Guy's Hospital; one of the Council in the Botanical Department of the London Medical Society; Physician to the General Dispensary; Honorary Member of the Physical Societies of Guy's and Bartholomew's Hospitals; Member of the Lyceum Medicum Londinense, &c. Author of Medical Extracts on the Nature of Health, with Practical Observations, and the Laws of the Nervous and Fibrous Systems; and of Letters to Dr. Beddoes on the Theory and Practice of Pneumatic Medicine.

THE object of this Work is to trace in as perspicuous a manner as possible the philosophic principles of Botany, from the earliest times, up to the present period, and by faithful and well executed Engravings of the several subjects of investigation, to render this curious and interesting inquiry level to every one's comprehension. Following the order of Nature, we shall begin with the seed committed to the ground, and trace its various evolutions, until the root, stem, branches, and leaves are formed. We shall here chiefly dwell on the Anatomy of the root, their diversity of forms, and office. The object of our next consideration will be to display the organized structure of the stem and branches, when we shall consider the several juices of plants, with the motion of the sap. Pursuing the course of Nature, we shall next contemplate the various appendages attached to the stems and branches, explaining the organization and design of each. Next we shall examine into the structure and variety of leaves; their relationship to light; the evolution from them of Oxygen, and other airs. Our next inquiry will be the food of plants, when we shall enter widely into the consideration of the principles of agriculture. Arriving at the flower, we shall consider its structure; the uses of the several parts which compose it; when a full inquiry will be made respecting the Sexual relationship, with a refutation of the objections which have been raised against this doctrine. Thus far the Natural History of Botany. We shall next lay before our readers an account of the origin of Systems, when those of Rivinus, Tournefort, &c. will be given, with a full explanation of the Sexual System of Linnæus, In the order of the discoveries, the lives of the several eminent Botanists will be comprehended, with their Portraits, including the most celebrated Professors and Botanical Writers of the present day. After this introduction, we shall commence with a translation of the Genera of Plants of Linnæus, to which will be added all the late discoveries made since his time. In order to render the Science of Botany as simple as possible, the classes of Linnæus will be reduced to twelve, his Genera new arranged, and Tables given, invented by the Author, comprising the easiest discriminating characters. The whole will be illustrated by the most elegant picturesque Botanical Plates, almost vying with Nature herself;* and, finally, as this Work is designed to be a NATIONAL HOMAGE to Linnæus, all the first Artists of this Country have been engaged, (as Messrs. Russell, Opie, Reinagle, Bartolozzi, Earlom, Heath, Caldwell, Medland, Warner, Landseer, Lowry, Ridley, &c.) and Dr. THORNTON has waved all idea of pecuniary recompense, and pledges himself to the Public, that the whole money subscribed will be expended upon this splendid undertaking.

* Of the excellency of the Plates, we are able to state the following flattering testimony from Dr. Rutherford, F. R. S. Professor of Botany, and President of the Edinburgh College of Physicians. "The NEW ILLUSTRATION, "I may well judge, from the specimens before me, will indeed far surpass in Elegance and Splendour every thing "that has hitherto been offered to the memory of Linnæus. I do not know which most to admire, whether the "accuracy of the Designs, the softness and delicacy of the Engravings, or the general effect of the whole. I never "did see representation of any flowers whatever in colours more brilliant, or more just. At a small distance one "would rather have imagined that the Real Objects themselves were before us, than only their pictures; the De- "ception is, I think, complete. The NEW ILLUSTRATION will be not only the most splendid Botanical Work "extant, but a standard example, shewing to what a height one of the chief branches of the fine arts has attained "in England."

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ADDRESS.

DR. THORNTON flatters himself that his New Illustration of Linnæus, will meet, even at the present time, with the fostering protection of his country; and that, while the laurel is entwined round the brow of the warrior, the polite arts will not be neglected; but, on the contrary, be warmly cherished by a great and opulent nation, which, while it brandishes the lightning of death in defence of its independence, its liberties, and its honour, knows, at the same time, how to respect and cultivate the liberal arts, which add no less to the glory of a nation. Under this persuasion, every exertion has been used to bring forward this New Illustration of Linnæus, and to carry it forward with spirit.

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